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rational and which tends to kill the reason and the higher emotions. Jingoism, imperialism as a creed of national superiority, militarism—these ways of thought have all found expression in England as in America, but they no longer have the sanction of influential opinion.

Other and more specific subjects are discussed by Mr. Murray from the same point of view, and with the same moderation and acuteness. There is a chapter upon the English policy toward Ireland. There are two chapters upon America's relation to the war, chapters that emphasize and clarify our country's mission. Particularly interesting also to American readers should be Mr. Murray's analysis of the Democratic Control of Foreign Relations.

Although many of the papers contained in this volume were written so early in the war as to have lost the appeal of timeliness, there is in the views expressed a permanent rightness that gives the book lasting importance.

A SON OF THE MIDDLE BORDER. By Hamlin Garland. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917.

There are biographies which are said to be more fascinating than any novel, but in the majority of these it will be found that the superiority of interest is in inverse proportion to the degree in which the life-story approaches the novel in form. And so we often turn with relief from the brightly colored pictures of fiction to the matter-of-fact relation of interesting events that actually happened.

Hamlin Garland, however, is one of those novelists who have managed in an uncommon degree to join sober matter-of-factness with imaginative charm. It should not surprise one, then, to find that the autobiographical chapters which Mr. Garland has entitled *A Son of the Middle Border* are not only rewarding as reminiscence, but also rich in the imaginative and emotional values of the author's best fiction. Here one may perceive all the novelist's trained skill in the portraiture of character, and that larger vision which sees a human being dramatically in his true setting. Here, too, is to be found an abundance of that vivid and affectionately truthful description which in Mr. Garland's other writings has helped to preserve for us the life of the Middle Western frontier. One hardly knows at first whether one is reading a novel or a biography, so skilfully is the tale woven; yet the narrative is drawn out as straight as a string; in its composition there is neither artificiality nor undue reserve.

The fullness and richness of the style arises from no luxuriance of self-expression. For though the author frankly writes of himself, he loses himself in a larger theme.

Hamlin Garland's father was a man with the soul of a pioneer. A soldier in the Civil War, stern and authoritative, hard-working and efficient, a lover of home and family, he was led on, like many men of less stable character, by the lure of distant horizons. The story of his life and that of his family is a tale of successive migrations leading from Wisconsin through Minnesota and at last into Dakota, a tale of the longings and hardships and consolations of pioneers, of the conflict of dreams with reality.

As a boy Hamlin Garland did a man's work on the farm. As

a youth he went East with his brother, earning his way and absorbing knowledge of men and nature. As a young man he gradually established himself first as a teacher and then as a writer, feeling strong purposes take hold of him as he matured. As a man in the prime of life he was able to establish his aging parents in a position of comfort and happiness. In outline the story is as simple as possible, yet it is a wonderful story.

Out of it all there emerges a conception of life as a spectacle interesting in the large because of its picturesque and dramatic features, and at the same time as a business to be discharged soberly and earnestly. There emerges, too, a conception of vigorous and honest living and an ideal of literary expression as something vitally connected with real life and with genuine conviction. There is something unfeignedly optimistic in the tone of the whole narrative, despite its grimness in some particulars; a joy in homely and familiar things and a confidence in the right tendencies that ultimately control the world. Nothing could be more American than the mingling of practicality and idealism that is felt everywhere in the story. Nothing could be more wholesome in these times than the lesson of intellectual honesty and large sympathy which is implicit in it.

HIS OWN COUNTRY. By Paul Kester. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1917.

No theme is too difficult for the right author, and no doubt it is possible to make the Southern negro-problem the theme of a story as penetrating as dramatic, and by very much more tragic than sensational. This, however, Mr. Kester has not done. With very considerable talent, and with more than average knowledge of his subject-matter, he has written a strange and wonderful melodrama, at times verging on power, at times so crude as to be scarcely tolerable.

The central figure of *His Own Country* is a former slave, who as a physician in Montreal has accumulated a considerable fortune and gained a creditable reputation. Dr. Brent, after all, is only half-negro, and on the Caucasian side claims descent from one of the best families of Virginia. Married to a white wife, with sons and daughters educated abroad, himself associating upon equal terms with the white people of his adopted city, he feels justly confident of deserving respect. It is his dream to return as proprietor to the plantation where he had been a slave, and, as the result of a blindness to obvious facts which no amount of explanation serves to make quite plausible in a man of Brent's supposed intelligence, he looks forward to being received if not with open arms at least tolerantly by the old families of "Northmoreland County." The opportunity arises; the plan is carried through; the landed proprietors of Northmoreland, having organized themselves into a reception committee to greet the new owner of Comorn Hall as he disembarks from the steamer, discover that the newcomer is a negro.

Plainly, Dr. Brent had made a tragic mistake. With all possible ingenuity, Mr. Kester heaps the tragic consequences high upon the unfortunate Doctor and upon nearly all of those who are associated